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Subject: SUBJECT MATTER: 1915(c) Home and Community-Based Services Waiver, CT Acquired Brain Injury Waiver II Application

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My name is Craig Sears I was in a motor vehicle accident in 1987, leaving me with a traumatic brain injury. After suffering a brain injury, as most survivors do, I have been faced with many new and overwhelming challenges in everyday living. As a survivor of a brain injury, my journey made me all-too familiar with the difficulties of individuals and families working through the arbitrary system of care.

In the 1990s while being imprisoned and institutionalized I became a spokesman for brain injury survivors, advocating for Connecticut's Acquired Brain Injury Medicaid Waiver which was implemented in 1999.

The current ABI Waiver is the first Medicaid-funded program in Connecticut that allows individuals with brain injuries to live in the community instead of institutions, and it does so while reducing state expenditures by providing services at an average of 75% of the cost of alternative institutional care AND receives approximately 50% reimbursement from the Federal government. Simply put, this truly remarkable Program has not only made an incredible difference in the lives of many families and survivors in Connecticut but has saved the State money!

I am strongly opposed to ABI Waiver II. The implementation of ABI Waiver II will lead to significant harm, serious crisis and put the health and safety of present and future brain injury survivors and their families in CT at great risk.

The new Waiver is nothing but a vehicle to allow Dept. of Social Services to jump over people on the current wait list in order to provide services for people at the back of the wait list who will save the state more money.

This unethical and immoral way of choosing who will receive services in CT is frightening for people of ALL disabilities. This means determining services is not based on need and the date of application for services; rather, CT can choose to create new methods to determine who gets life-changing services based on the calculation of how many dollars they will save CT. This is not only immoral, but a violation of civil rights.

Expand and improve the current ABI waiver program - don't kill it! Look at somebody like me, before getting the current waiver services I was homeless, and being thrown inside prisons and even psychiatric hospitals for years at a time.

11 Years Later I am very proud and I'm very happy to say that I have yet to be thrown back into a prison, homeless, or hospitalized; I have now become a National Advocate for Brain Injury survivors and their families. I've been in meetings with congressional leaders, speaking firsthand with people that can affect change. It's clear to me without the support and services of the current ABI waiver I wouldn't be able to survive, and I'm sure that everybody who is on the current waiver feels the same way. I don't get it; instead Department of Social Services is requesting funding for a new, very large Waiver. When we have been told for years they

cannot expand the current Waiver. I don't get it; why can't they take the current waiver that is working for the brain Injury survivor and their families and make it better? I just want other brain injury survivors to have the same opportunities as I have had, and I will support any and all Legislators and decision makers who support me and other brain injury survivors!

Craig Sears

part 2

On March 10, 2014 I was with the Ct Brain Injury Support Network, Lt. Governor Nancy Wyman, Dept. of Social Services Commissioner Bremby, after that meeting Commissioner Bremby requested another meeting with us as soon as possible and we meet with him and 11 of the top level people at Dept. of Social Services, again on March 12th.

My thoughts:

Talk about being clueless! Someone correct me if I am wrong, isn't Connecticut called the Constitution State? Need I say any more when I say, no matter how it's justified or what the outcome, the US says we have rights; but the State's trample all over them as if they are immune;

FACT; by creating a new ABI/TBI Medicaid waiver the current ABI Waiver will die, with no new participants it will soon NOT qualify for federal funding and will cease to exist. Sooner rather than later!

FACT; the new Waiver is a mental health support model instead of a brain injury rehabilitative model... Moreover the practice violates our rights secured by the fourteenth amendment to the U.S. Constitution and the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 ... to be free from undue restraint, to receive training sufficient to prevent the deterioration of basic self – care skills... And to live in a safe environment guaranteed to them by due process clause.

As it was in the 1990's when I became a member of Connecticut's class action lawsuit advocating for Connecticut's Acquired Brain Injury/Traumatic Brain Injury (ABI/TBI) Medicaid Waiver (CTDSS, 2006)

Also seeing how the ABI waiver is from 18 to 64 years old and the National Pediatric Acquired Brain Injury Plan Act of 2011 goes from birth to 25 years old and then transitioning into an adult system of greater independent living it is also in violation of that Act.

What I did not say: Being someone that lives with a brain injury my journey made me all-too familiar with the difficulties of individuals and families working through the arbitrary system of care. Please call me when there is a possible class action lawsuit. I am more than happy to become part of it.

Craig Sears